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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixtieth year

Letter dated 5 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on its 22nd ministerial meeting, held from 14 to 18 March 2005, in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 66 (h), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Basile **Ikouebe**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 5 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa on its 22nd ministerial meeting

Brazzaville, 14-18 March 2005

A. Introduction

The 22nd ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 14 to 18 March 2005.

All member States took part in the meeting: the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and the Rwandese Republic.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read by the Representative of FAO in the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Amadou Ouattara;
- A message from the Chairman of the African Union, read by the Special Representative of the Chairman of the Commission of the African Union in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Martin Bongo; and
- A message from the Secretary-General of ECCAS, read by the Deputy Secretary-General responsible for human integration, peace, security and stability, H.E. Mr. Nelson Cosme.

The opening address was delivered by H.E. Mr. Isidore Mvouba, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, with responsibility for the coordination of Government action and privatizations, and the closing address was delivered by H.E. Mr. Paul Mbot, Minister of Security and Law and Order.

B. Conduct of work

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

I. Adoption of the agenda of the 22nd ministerial meeting.

II. Election of the Bureau.

III. Presentation of the report of the outgoing Bureau by the President.

IV. Geopolitical and security situation in member countries of the Committee:

(a) Republic of Burundi

(b) Central African Republic

(c) Democratic Republic of the Congo

(d) Republic of Chad

(e) Situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rwandese Republic

(f) Exchange of experiences in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants in Central Africa

V. The mercenary threat in Central Africa.

VI. The role of the Committee/ECCAS in promoting the implementation of the Dar-Es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

VII. Status of preparations for the Bahr-El-Ghazal military exercise.

VIII. Contribution of Central Africa to the work of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York from 11 to 15 July 2005: report by member States of the Committee on the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities adopted at the conclusion of the Brazzaville seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

IX. Report on the activities of the ECCAS secretariat in the areas of peace and security.

X. Report on the activities of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

XI. Adoption of the Committee's programme of work for the period 2005-2006.

XII. Date and place of the next meeting.

XIII. Other matters.

XIV. Adoption of the report of the 22nd ministerial meeting.

II. Election of the Bureau

The Committee elected a Bureau comprised of the following countries:

President: Republic of the Congo

First Vice-President: Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

Second Vice-President: the Rwandese Republic

Rapporteur: Republic of Angola

III. Presentation of the report of the outgoing Bureau by the President

The Committee took due note of the report presented by the President of the outgoing Bureau on the activities of the Bureau.

He commended the Bureau for the dynamism with which it had performed its duties and for its active contribution, in cooperation with the secretariat, to the preparation and organization of the 21st and 22nd ministerial meetings.

The Committee took particular note of the recommendations made by the President of the outgoing Bureau on the need to provide translation services into Spanish and Portuguese for future ministerial meetings.

The new Bureau was given a mandate to take the necessary steps to obtain the said translation services.

IV. Geopolitical and security situation in member countries of the Committee

The situation in Central Africa and in particular in the countries concerned by this review of the geopolitical and security situation has improved considerably in relation to previous years. While there were regrettable instances of a resurgence of armed clashes, killings and destruction of all sorts, persistent violations of human rights and a tenuous human rights situation, the various peace processes under way in the region nevertheless seem to be advancing steadily towards the conclusion yearned for by the peoples of the region and by the international community, namely, the holding of free and democratic elections that will result in a sharing of power between former belligerents or at least in a national consensus on the conditions of the exercise of power.

This positive development should not, however, hide the fact that the processes in question remain fragile and that the parties concerned, the other countries of the subregion and the international community must redouble their efforts to ensure that the guns fall silent for good and that a new era is ushered in for the countries and peoples who for far too long have been helpless victims of the scourge of war.

To this end, the Committee launched an appeal and urged the subregion to become more closely involved in the settlement of the conflicts with which it is plagued and in support of the various peace processes under way.

The Committee condemns all forms of violence committed against women and children and recommends the strengthening of mechanisms to punish those responsible for violations of the rights of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations. This is in keeping with the plan of action for the protection of women and children adopted at the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflict, held in Kinshasa from 14 to 16 November 2001.

(a) Republic of Burundi

The Committee welcomed the progress made in the situation in Burundi, notably:

- The decision taken by the majority of the parties in Burundi to peacefully extend the transition period in order to allow for the adoption of the constitution and the organization of elections in good conditions;
- The acceptance and adoption by the principal parties of an electoral timetable and laws governing the major political issues;
- The adoption by an overwhelming majority, by referendum, of a post-transition constitution;
- The general improvement in the military situation, with, inter alia, the creation of mixed security brigades comprised of members of the armed forces of Burundi and ex-combatants of the armed political movements;
- Launching of the programme of disarmament and demobilization for ex-combatants.

The Committee nevertheless expressed deep concern at the worsening security situation, in particular the increase in crime in urban and rural areas, the continued killings, the increase in criminal activities by ex-combatants, and the proliferation of small arms, among other things.

It condemned Palipehutu-FNL for continuing to remain outside of the peace process, to foment insecurity with the complicity of the Interahamwe, and to pursue its attacks, despite the efforts of the Transitional Government and the international community. It condemned, in particular, the selective massacre of Banyamulenge Congolese, on 13 August 2004, at the Gatumba transit centre.

The Committee expressed concern at the lack of adequate financial resources for the effective implementation of the DDR process, whose delay risks jeopardizing the entire peace process.

It appealed to:

- Palipehutu-FNL to sign, without delay, a ceasefire agreement with the Transitional Government of Burundi and to return to the peace process which began and is continuing under the Arusha Agreement;
- All the political parties in Burundi and to the regional and international communities to work together to create conditions conducive to the organization of the various elections that are due to be held, without pressure or haste, including by making available to the Government of Burundi the necessary financial and material resources;
- The international community to provide the necessary financial support for the DDR process, whose effective implementation and success are prerequisites for the return to lasting peace in Burundi.

(b) Central African Republic

The Committee welcomed the positive developments in the situation in the Central African Republic, notably:

- The adoption by the National Transitional Council and the Transitional Government of such important legislative texts as: the draft constitution and the electoral code, the draft regulations governing political parties and the status of the opposition, the draft regulations on the establishment,

organization and functioning of the Transitional Constitutional Court, the draft regulations on the creation of the High Council on Communications, and the draft regulations on freedom of communication in the Central African Republic, as well as the promulgation of these texts by the President of the Republic;

The adoption by the Central African parties, with the mediation of the President of the Gabonese Republic, H.E. Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, of the Libreville Agreement of 22 January 2005, which redefines the respective competencies of the Transitional Constitutional Court and of the independent Joint Electoral Commission, establishes a code of good conduct, and revalidates most of the candidacies previously rejected by the Court;

– The establishment on 14 September 2004 by the Central African authorities of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission for ex-combatants;

– The holding on 13 March 2005, in an atmosphere of calm, of the first round of presidential and legislative elections.

The Committee nevertheless expressed grave concern at the continued insecurity, characterized by abuses and summary executions by the forces of law and order, acts of banditry, armed thefts and attacks by individuals who set up roadblocks, among other things.

It noted with satisfaction the commitment of the Central African authorities to systematically prosecute and punish abuses committed by the forces of law and order and welcomed the efforts of the defence and security forces and of the Multinational Force of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) to combat insecurity throughout the territory.

The Committee appealed to:

– Bilateral and multilateral donors and to international financial institutions to pay special attention to the economic and financial situation of the Central African Republic and to provide it with the necessary support;

– Member States of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community to maintain and, where possible, intensify their efforts to make the country secure, including through general and complete disarmament and the restructuring of the defence and security forces;

– The other countries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and to the international community to contribute to the efforts under way to guarantee the security of the Central African Republic.

(c) Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee welcomed the notable progress made in the implementation of the transition process and the improvement in relations between the various components and entities of the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It welcomed the role played in this regard by the international community and in particular by Their Excellencies Mr. Thabo Mbeki, Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso

and Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Presidents, respectively, of the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of the Congo and the Gabonese Republic.

The Committee also noted the preparation by the transitional Government of a commitment document designed to ensure the effective implementation of the Global and All-inclusive Agreement, as well as the organization by the Government, Senate, National Assembly and Independent Electoral Commission of an inter-institutional seminar which agreed on an eight-point timetable calling on the institutions involved in the electoral process to perform certain specific tasks.

However, it expressed deep concern at the continuing deterioration in the security situation in eastern and northern Katanga, characterized by, among other things:

- Criminal activities by militia groups in Ituri, which are responsible for the large-scale massacre of civilians, sexual violence, repeated attacks against the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) contingent in Ituri, and the recent killing of nine Bangladeshi Blue Helmets;
- The resurgence of tensions among political factions in North Kivu and South Kivu, marked by renewed clashes between armed groups and the worsening of ethnic tensions.

The Committee welcomed the measures taken by the transitional Government with a view to improving security conditions and prosecuting and punishing the illegal and criminal activities of militia leaders.

The Committee welcomed the efforts of MONUC and requested the United Nations to continue to support the peace process under way in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It appealed to:

The various Congolese factions and entities to take the necessary steps to overcome the mistrust that continues to impede efforts to build a truly unified country, achieve genuine power-sharing, and organize elections that are transparent and free of violence.

The entire political class of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to abide strictly by the provisions of the Global and All-inclusive Agreement and of the Transitional Constitution;

The international community to support the efforts of the transitional Government and the Congolese people towards reconstruction, national reconciliation and the preparation of elections.

(d) Republic of Chad

The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Chadian authorities to strengthen the democratic process in their country, notably within the framework of efforts to prepare for consultations on the referendum and local elections to be held during 2005 and to convene a meeting of army chiefs of staff in April 2005.

It also welcomed the removal of roadblocks from main roads linking Chad with neighbouring countries.

However, the Committee expressed its concern at the re-emergence of insecurity and cross-border crime in Chad, as well as at the influx of refugees into the country as a result of conflicts under way in some neighbouring countries.

It welcomed the contribution of the Chadian authorities to efforts to strengthen peace and stability in the Central African Republic, as well as their valuable support for efforts to restore peace and security in Sudan's Darfur region, and urged member States to provide the Chadian authorities with all necessary support.

(e) Situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rwandese Republic

The Committee expressed its deep concern at the continued tensions and incidents on the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rwandese Republic.

It expressed particular concern at the presence of Rwandan armed groups in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which poses a constant threat to the security of the Rwandan population in the border regions, as well as to the local Congolese civilian population. It added that the presence of these armed groups poisons relations between the various ethnic groups and armed elements in North Kivu and South Kivu and creates tensions between the Rwandese Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee nevertheless welcomed the efforts of both countries to improve the security situation at their shared border by peaceful and agreed means, including:

- The signing on 22 September 2004 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries of the terms of reference for the joint verification mechanism, which provides a framework for the parties to consider jointly cross-border issues of mutual concern, including the question of the remaining ex-FAR/Interahamwe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The signing on 26 October 2004 by Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda of a regional security agreement aimed at strengthening relations between the three countries, and their efforts to stop their territories from being used as bases for foreign troops;
- The participation of the two countries in the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which took place in Dar-es-Salaam on 19 and 20 November 2004 and which adopted a Declaration affirming the collective desire of the participating countries to bring lasting peace and security to the countries and peoples of the Great Lakes Region;
- The verification on 14 December 2004 by the two countries' joint verification mechanism of the official complaint lodged by the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 29 November that thousands of Rwandan soldiers had been present in the two provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu since January 2004. The verification team could not confirm the presence of Rwandan soldiers, but the local population indicated to the team that ex-FAR/Interahamwe were active in the region;

– Rwanda's decision of 19 December 2004 to withdraw its threat of 23 November 2004 to send troops into the Democratic Republic of the Congo while noting that it was relying on the international community to settle, once and for all, the problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe still present in the country. For its part, the transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has repeatedly assured Rwanda of its intention to disarm the ex-FAR/Interahamwe with a view to ending the sole source of tension between the two fraternal countries.

The Committee urged the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to expedite the implementation of the decision taken in Libreville on 10 January 2005 to provide a military force to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in disarming the ex-FAR/Interahamwe and other hostile forces operating in the eastern part of the country.

(f) Exchange of experiences on the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants in Central Africa

During the exchange by delegations of their experiences with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants that are under way in their respective countries, the Committee expressed its deep concern at the severe shortage of funds necessary for the launching or effective implementation of such programmes in countries of the subregion that are emerging from situations of conflict.

It considered that the excessive delays and many imbalances that have affected the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, due to the lack of funds, could lead to renewed clashes and jeopardize the significant efforts being made to restore peace, security and development to the countries concerned.

The Committee urgently appealed to:

– Member States emerging from situations of conflict to make the necessary efforts to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants;

– The international community, and donor countries in particular, to provide concrete assistance to the countries concerned to enable them to implement the above-mentioned programmes within the established time frames.

V. The mercenary threat in Central Africa

The Committee listened with interest to a presentation by the delegation of Equatorial Guinea on the attempt by a group of mercenaries in 2004 to destabilize that country's institutions.

It reiterated its vigorous condemnation of this attempt to destabilize one of its member States and expressed its deep concern at the persistence of this problem and the threat that it continued to pose to the security and stability of the countries of the region.

The Committee expressed satisfaction at the existence, both in Africa and around the world, of laws forbidding and providing for the prosecution and punishment of mercenary activities and their sponsors and urged its members to take

the necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of such laws and to strengthen their national legal and security mechanisms for combating the problem.

The Committee adopted a Declaration on the use of mercenaries, which is attached as an annex to this report.

VI. The role of the Committee/ECCAS in promoting the implementation of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region

The Committee welcomed the active participation of member States of ECCAS in the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which took place in Dar-es-Salaam on 19 and 20 November 2004, and in the preparatory process.

It welcomed the adoption at that Conference of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, by which the Heads of State of member States attending the Conference expressed their determination to make the Great Lakes region a zone of lasting peace and security, political and social stability, growth, cooperation and shared development.

The Committee noted with interest that the goals of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration largely coincide with its own long-standing concerns as well as those of ECCAS, and stressed the need to harmonize the activities of the Committee and ECCAS with efforts to promote the implementation of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration.

It stressed that the Dar-es-Salaam process could benefit from certain initiatives undertaken by the Committee and by ECCAS, and urged ECCAS to become more closely involved in the follow-up to the process, including in the preparations for the Second Summit of Heads of State of the Conference, to be held in November 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Committee adopted a Declaration on the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which is attached as an annex to this report.

VII. Status of preparations for the Bahr-El-Ghazal 2005 joint military exercise

The Committee noted with interest the information provided by the Chadian delegation on the status of preparations for the Bahr-El-Ghazal 2005 joint military exercise, which will take place in that country in November 2005.

It expressed its concern at the low level of contributions made thus far and urged countries that had not yet done so to make their contributions as soon as possible so that the preparatory work could continue and the exercise held on the scheduled dates.

VIII. Contribution of Central Africa to the work of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York from 11 to 15 July 2005: report by member States of the Committee on the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities adopted at the conclusion of the Brazzaville seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Committee took note with interest of the reports submitted by member States on the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities adopted at the Brazzaville seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, with a view to preparing for the Second Biennial Meeting of States, which will be held in New York from 11 to 15 July 2005 to review the implementation of the Programme.

It welcomed the actions and initiatives undertaken by member States to implement the Programme of Priority Activities adopted in Brazzaville and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, notably:

- The adoption of legislation for the prosecution and punishment of offences relating to possession of, or illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;
- The creation of special units to combat organized crime and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and providing increased resources to existing structures;
- The organization by the security forces of operations for the collection of illegal weapons, particularly in border areas;
- The establishment of national commissions and the creation of national focal points to coordinate efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;
- The exchange of information between the security services of neighbouring countries and the organization of joint border operations;
- The organization of training or awareness-raising exercises on issues relating to the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

The Committee expressed concern at the difficulties that continue to jeopardize the efforts of countries in the subregion to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, particularly:

- Porous borders that encourage the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons;
- Lack of suitable detection equipment and properly trained personnel;
- Absence of accurate information and data on the type and quantity of weapons in circulation;

The Committee called upon member States to play an active part in the Second Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in New York from 11 to 15 July 2005;

It appealed to:

- Member States to redouble their efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms at the national and subregional levels, putting particular emphasis on the need for States to harmonize their legislation;
- ECCAS to become more involved in combating the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms and to launch initiatives to harmonize the legislation of member States;
- The international community to provide countries in the subregion with the necessary support to effectively combat the illicit trade in small arms.

IX. Report on the activities of the ECCAS secretariat in the areas of peace and security

The Committee took note with interest of the report submitted by the secretariat of ECCAS on its activities in the areas of peace and security.

It welcomed, in particular, the secretariat's actions in the following areas:

- Ongoing efforts to establish a regional standby Brigade and regional headquarters to be provisionally located in Libreville until 2007, in the context of the pending establishment of the African Standby Force;
- Preparations for and the holding of meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);
- Ongoing efforts to launch the Early-Warning Mechanism for Central Africa (MARAC) with support from the European Union (€4 million);
- Reactivation of the unit responsible for the coordination of activities to combat drugs and the laundering of the proceeds of drug-related activities in Central Africa;
- Support in organizing the legislative and presidential elections held on 13 March 2005 in the Central African Republic and the sending of electoral observers;
- Preparations for the meeting to establish the Network of Central African Parliamentarians, to be held in Malabo in May 2005;
- Participation in the International Conference on Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region.

X. Report on the activities of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

The Committee took note with interest of the report of the Director of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa on the activities of that body.

It welcomed the activities of the Centre, in particular:

- The organization of training activities designed to build capacity in the areas of human rights and democracy in Central Africa;
- Its support for civil society and for training and research institutions;
- The organization of advanced training courses for nationals of countries in the subregion and from other continents;

With regard to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 11 November 2004 concerning the strengthening of the Centre and the meeting of the Committee held in Malabo in 2004, the Committee:

- Congratulated the Director of the Centre and his team for the work accomplished;
- Also congratulated the Government of Cameroon for its extrabudgetary contribution for the strengthening of the Centre;
- Called upon member States to take the necessary measures to support the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in raising extrabudgetary contributions for the Centre's activities;

XI. Adoption of the Committee's programme of work for the period 2005-2006

The Committee included the following items in its programme of work for the period 2005-2006:

- Organization of the Committee's 23rd and 24th ministerial meetings;
- Organization of the seminar on the involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities on small arms, adopted in Brazzaville.

The Committee expressed deep concern at the lack of sufficient resources in the special trust fund for financing its extrabudgetary activities.

It appealed urgently to member States and donors to contribute generously to the special trust fund.

XII. Date and place of the next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its 23rd ministerial meeting in Brazzaville from 22 to 26 August 2005.

XIII. Other matters

The Committee urged member States to relax their restrictions on the free movement of persons, particularly during periods when its meetings were being held.

The Committee decided to include the following items in the agenda of its 23rd ministerial meeting:

- Follow-up to the United Nations multidisciplinary assessment mission to Central Africa in 2003;
- Results of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms;
- The MARAC study;
- Exchange of experiences on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants in Central Africa.

* * *

In conclusion, the participants expressed satisfaction at the pleasant atmosphere in which they conducted their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to H.E. Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to the Government and people of the Congo for the warm welcome and kind hospitality they received during their stay in the Republic of the Congo.

Brazzaville, 18 March 2005

Annex I

Declaration on mercenary activity in Central Africa

The 22nd ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 14 to 18 March 2005;

Noting with frustration that mercenary activity took root long ago in Central Africa, where it has become a serious obstacle to peace, stability and development in the subregion;

Recalling General Assembly resolution 44/34 of 4 December 1989, which opened for signature, ratification or accession the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries;

Referring to the Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union at the summit meeting held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 July 2004, which condemned mercenary activities, especially those conducted against Equatorial Guinea on 7 March 2004;

Expresses its concern at the recurrence of mercenary activity and its consequences for security and stability in the countries of Central Africa;

Commends the Governments of Angola, South Africa and Zimbabwe for their cooperation with the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, which made it possible to thwart this attempt at destabilization;

Invites member States to increase their exchange of information and to adopt appropriate legislation to combat mercenary activity;

Requests member States to take concrete measures through effective cooperation among all States of the subregion, which, once adopted, will combat mercenary activity in Central Africa.

Brazzaville, 18 March 2005

Annex II

Declaration on the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region

The 22nd ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville, from 14 to 18 March 2005,

Considering paragraphs 17 to 27 of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration of 20 November 2004 regarding priority policy options and guiding principles in the area of peace and security, and paragraphs 28 to 36 regarding democracy and good governance;

Considering that more than half of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee participate in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;

Considering the role of ECCAS in the strengthening of peace and security in its member States;

Welcomes the progress made at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in particular the successful convening of the First Summit of Heads of State, in Dar-es-Salaam in November 2004;

Encourages member States to consider the existing legal instruments in ECCAS and to broaden their scope, particularly that of the Non-Aggression Pact and the Mutual Assistance Pact;

Urges ECCAS to become more involved in defining the projects, action programmes and protocols to be adopted to that end, and calls upon it to hold consultations in the near future between ECCAS members that are part of the group of countries of the region and the secretariat;

Endorses all of the recommendations of the Heads of State and Government contained in the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration, in particular those aimed at transforming the Great Lakes region into "a special zone for reconstruction and development";

Calls upon the international community in general and the development partners of the Great Lakes region in particular to give this region all the attention that it deserves.

Brazzaville, 18 March 2005